

This Week in Congress

July 25, 2005

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this useful.

Meeting with the President on CAFTA

On Wednesday, I was called to the White House by President Bush to discuss the upcoming vote on the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and trade policy. I expressed my concerns about this agreement, especially as we look at other issues related to trade, specifically our continued trade embargo on Cuba and the lack of progress on reopening the Japanese border to U.S. beef imports.

During the meeting with the President and U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman, I told them that, while it is good to lower the tariffs that U.S. exporters of manufactured goods and agricultural commodities face when selling to foreign countries, our trade policy has to be more than just entering into trade agreements. It seems as though time and time again, even after tariff reductions are agreed to, many of our trading partners find excuses to limit sales of our products coming into their country. They cannot have it both ways - their products being imported into our country, while our sales are restricted.

We also discussed my concerns about trade with Cuba and Japan. In July of 2001, I offered the amendment that led to opening the Cuban market for U.S. farmers and ranchers for the first time in nearly 40 years. Since that time, Cuba has purchased \$1.4 billion in agricultural commodities. However, the U.S. Department of Treasury has recently created additional restrictions on sales.

I also told the President that the most important trade issue to Kansas' First District is reopening U.S. beef sales to Japan and South Korea. My district produces nearly five billion pounds of beef annually, making it the largest beef producing congressional district in the nation. The President must continue to exert every pressure possible on the Japanese and South Korean governments to reopen their borders to U.S. beef and meat products.

Meeting with Matthew Whaley of Scott City

This week I had the honor of meeting with eight-year-old Matthew Whaley, of Scott City, in my office. Matthew was in Washington, D.C. receiving recognition from the National Disability Rights Network during their celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Matthew, who has cerebral palsy, won a court battle in order to be allowed to play little league baseball. I was very impressed with this young man, and it was great to meet him and talk about his time in Washington and about baseball. Matthew was accompanied by his mother, Jennifer Berends.

Improving Security in the Homeland While Protecting our Rights

The bombings of London's transit system over the past two weeks are a reminder that, while our country has made progress since September 11, 2001 in preventing additional terrorist attacks on our soil, the threat of terrorism continues from those who want to destroy our way of life. On Thursday, the House voted to reauthorize certain provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act was signed into law in 2001 following the September 11 terrorist attacks, in order to update and improve our capabilities to prevent terrorism. I believe it is important that we remain vigilant in our efforts to root out and prosecute terrorists. However, we must do this while protecting the personal freedoms we enjoy as American citizens.

During debate on the legislation, I supported several amendments to make changes to the PATRIOT Act in order to better protect our civil liberties. This includes measures to protect the privacy of library and bookstore patrons and to prohibit searches without proper notification. As Congress continues consideration of these issues, I will work to balance Americans' civil liberties with our nation's anti-terrorism and security needs.

Speaking to the Kansas Grain and Feed Association

On Tuesday, I joined my friends from the Kansas Grain and Feed Association and Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association during their annual luncheon in Washington, D.C. As their speaker, I talked to the group about the upcoming vote on CAFTA and other issues affecting the grain industry.

At the event, president of the organization and long-time friend, Tom Tunnell, presented me with the 2004 Jim Widrig Award, which recognizes legislative achievement. I was honored to receive the award from a group that does so much on behalf of agriculture. Also in attendance

were Vice President Aaron Harries; Vice President of Government Affairs Duane Simpson; and Manager of Event Planning Shari Bennet, all of Topeka. Members there included Gary Lortscher of Bern, Bill Hocraffer of Hays, Larry Shivers of Salina, Johnny Schaben of Ellinwood, Lawrence Baxa of Copeland, Kim Beam of Cimarron, Brent Emch of Atchison, David Erwin of Syracuse, Travis Hirst of Garden City, Jeff Mayfield of Ryus, Lance Nelson of Haviland, Kammi Schwarting of Garden City, Richard Tippin of Hillsboro and Jeff Wilkinson of Salina.

Visiting Wakeeney, Plainville

This past weekend, I visited with area residents in Wakeeney and Plainville. On Saturday, I rode in the Trego County Fair Parade, in Wakeeney. Sunday evening, I had the chance to visit locals during an evening walk down Main Street.

Big First Listening Tour Continues

In addition, my Big First Listening Tour is ongoing. For a full list of times and dates when I'll be in your county, visit here: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01_moran/041105TheTour.html

In the Office

Many Kansans were in my Washington, D.C. office this week. Tim Rogers, Director of the Salina Municipal Airport, was in to discuss a radar project at the airport. Also in were representatives from the Kansas Hospital Association. Attending were Terry Lambert and Dr. Ken Wright, both of Emporia, as well as Chad Austin, Senior Director of Health, and Fred Lucky, Senior Vice President of the Hospital Association, in Topeka. Mark Clear of Wellsville came by the office to discuss agriculture and access to affordable health care.

Dr. Tyler and Mary Hughes were in the office, to visit their daughter, Dorothy. Dorothy works for you in Washington, D.C., focusing on health care issues. I congratulated Sean Forte of Minneapolis, winner of the Kansas Tar Wars Poster Contest, when he was in the office this week. Joining him were his parents, Steve and Brenda Forte, siblings Craig and Nicole, and grandmother, Marilon Wenthe, all of Minneapolis; as well as Marina Spexarth, Kansas Tar Wars Coordinator from Wichita. In D.C. representing Lead America were Ashton Archer of Sylvan Grove, Rebecca Roelofsen of Abilene and Jude Williams of Pratt. Dave Murfin of Wichita was in the office with his family. Joining him were his wife, Janet and their children, Melissa, Will and Becca as well a cousin, Polly Talbott. Becca Murfin is an intern for Congressman Todd Tiahrt this summer.

Representatives from Coffeyville Resources were in to discuss changes in their company. In were Stan Riemann and Jack Lipinski, both of Coffeyville, and Gina Bowman-Morrill of Kansas City. In the office to discuss CAFTA was Donn Teske of Wheaton, President of Kansas Farmers Union. I met with John McPherson and Craig McPherson, both of Overland Park. The McPhersons were in to discuss aviation issues important to their company, Aviation Systems Maintenance, Inc.

State Representative Pat George of Dodge City was in, as was Kansas State Senator Dennis Wilson of Overland Park. Dr. Bill Hunter with Pratt Community College visited to discuss support for agriculture education. I was also able to meet with a group of Kansans representing the National Board Certification for Teachers of Kansas. In attendance were Lori Franklin of Olathe, Melody Head of Dodge City, Susan McCollum of Baldwin, and former State Senate Majority Leader Lana Oleen of Manhattan.

In my office this week for tours of the Capitol building were Joel and Lori Parriott of Salina and their children, Jake and Sydney; Alan and Janel Burch of Hays and their children, Justin and Gina; and Deryl and Wilda Carswell of Alton. Also in were Willis and Mary Frances Diehl; Glenn and Becky Diehl and children, Michael, Megan and Ryan, all from Hays; James and Margaret Weber of Salina; John and Marilyn Weber of Salina; Jennifer and Jakob Weber of Lawrence; John and Kriste Weber of Wichita and Jim and Virginia Weber of Lantana, TX. Doug Betts of Minneapolis was in for a tour as well, as were Tom and Sue Cooney of Morganville.

Another special guest in my office this week was my wife, Robba. Robba and I live in Hays with our two daughters, but she was in Washington, D.C. this week with two of her friends, Elise Peterson and Kay Werth, both of Hays.

Very truly yours,

Jerry